

THE QUIVER

Saturday, August 19, 1871.



"It was from Dr. Fleming"—p. 724.

TRIED.

BY F. M. F. SKENE, AUTHOR OF "A STORY OF VIONVILLE."

CHAPTER XLII.

It was the evening before Dr. Fleming's short visit to Combe Bathurst was to terminate;—it had been a time of strange happiness to him. May had devoted herself to him as much as she possibly could, without neglecting her various duties among her people, and her companionship had been inexpressibly delightful to him. He was recalling every moment he had spent with her, every word she had uttered, as he

walked now to-and-fro in his room after the household had retired for the night. He was remembering with special satisfaction that she had several times spoken of the Leighs in a quiet, composed manner, without any of the emotion she had manifested during their first conversation on the subject.

"Surely, after his detestable conduct to her, she must be more than indifferent to him," thought Fleming, as he paced from wall to wall, with his head bent down, as was his wont when thinking deeply; "and, in any case, he is lost to her for ever. Certainly, Sydney Leigh was the only man she ever loved; but it is a too intolerable idea that she is to be condemned to a lonely, joyless life, because a fellow like that was totally unable to appreciate the treasure he possessed in her. Her great loving heart ought to have something nearer and dearer to fill its depths than Mrs. Denton and her little school children. It is all very well to talk of devoting herself to her people, and making Harry Bathurst her heir; she will feel in her inmost soul all the time, that she is shut out from the happiness which the poorest wife and mother on her estates can enjoy."

When the doctor had got thus far in his reflections, he stopped short in his walk, and a grim smile passed over his face.

"So, John Fleming," he said, "you are actually trying to persuade yourself that it is a disinterested desire for May Bathurst's happiness which is making you consider so anxiously whether you dare ask her to be your wife! Be honest, man, and face the truth. You know very well that you long for her with all your heart and soul—that to have her in your home would be like sunshine after dreariest night. Oh, my May!" he added, stretching out his arms, "will you not come to me—the one treasure of my life? Come to me!—come to me! I have loved you so long. I do not ask you to care for me, only come, and let me brighten your life with my whole heart's devotion." He leant his face on his hands, while his chest heaved with emotion. After a few moments, he slowly let them drop. "Is it utter folly?" he said; "is it quite hopeless?" Then he resumed his walk to-and-fro, once more pondering deeply. "I do not see why I should not risk it, at least," he said, at length; "I shall be no worse off than I am, if she does reject me. She is too gentle and too good to scorn the offer or resent it; and, after all, though in years I am so much older than she is—in one sense she is no longer young herself—she has passed through that which utterly takes the youth out of a woman's heart. Then she knows that I am acquainted with her history, that I should not expect or ask her love—such love, at least, as she squandered on that scoundrel. I shall be content if she will let me, as her husband, be her best and dearest friend. Surely, it would be better than her present lonely life, with no one near her but that silly old widow, who can be no companion to her. In a worldly point of view,

too, a marriage with me would be an advantage to her. Her reduced income is not half as large as mine. I could give her ample means for all her charities, and she should have everything she could desire for herself besides. Well, the end of it all is that I will try it; I dare not hope for success, but it is worth the trial."

Dr. Fleming slept very little that night, and he was up with the dawn next day, for he was to start by an early train for London. May had told him that she would be down in time to see that he had his breakfast comfortably; and there she was already, looking sweet and fresh as the morning, when he went into the pleasant room where the bright June sunshine was streaming through the open windows, and the scent of roses coming in on every fragrant breath of air.

Dr. Fleming did not seem to have much appetite for his breakfast, and he was somewhat silent and restless. At last he said, abruptly, "Did you not tell me your bailiff's gig was to take me to the station?"

"Yes. I hope you do not despise that humble vehicle," she answered, smiling; "you know I have no longer a carriage, nor even a pony phaeton, to place at your disposal."

"I do not despise it, certainly, but I do not wish to go in it; I have a more agreeable plan for myself, if you will consent to it."

"And what is that?"

"Let the gig take my portmanteau, while I go on foot to the station; and—will you walk part of the way with me yourself?"

"Oh, with pleasure!" exclaimed unsuspecting May; "it is such a lovely morning I shall quite enjoy it!" and she ran away to get her hat, as there was not much time to spare.

Soon the doctor and his companion were walking along the pleasant country road, which was almost deserted at that early hour. Once out of sight of the house, Fleming plunged into his subject, for he knew that if he lost this favourable opportunity, it might be months before he found such another.

"May," he said, very softly. He had often called her by that name since the days when she had been almost a child, but something in his tone made her turn towards him with a startled look. "May," he repeated, "I have now been enjoying five days of almost perfect happiness, and I am not capable of seeing it come to an end without trying to prolong it."

"Could you stay with us a little longer?" said May; "I should be so glad if you could."

"As a visitor—no. If I am never to be anything to you but your guest, the sooner I leave you the better; but I do long to have the blessing of your presence on my life, with such a longing as you little dream of. You must let me speak out my heart to you for once, May. You must not stop me, even if you would rather not hear me; for I do not

want you to misunderstand me." She had made a movement to speak, but at these words she drooped her head, and remained silent. Fleming went on, in a voice trembling with intense feeling: "I do not believe you require to be told what I have hardly ever tried to conceal, that for years upon years you have been dearest in all the world to me; when you were almost a child, still fancy free; when, a young girl, I saw that your whole heart was given to one who was not worthy of you; when you were his betrothed bride; when, giving him up, on the first hint of his faithlessness, you became an exile for his sake—through all these changes, each one seeming to put you more and more utterly out of my reach, I have loved you, May, with an unconquerable, undying love, which will go with me to my grave, whatever may be your answer to me now. But listen, hear me to the end. It is true that I ask you this day to be my wife, and that I do so, first of all, in my human weakness, because I long and pine to have you ever near me, as dying men long for life itself. But I do not ask you to give me the love which you have felt once, and probably can never feel again, even if I were one capable of inspiring it, which I cannot suppose I am. I ask you to let me be your nearest earthly friend, one on whom your heart may lean in hours of sadness, even when that sadness springs from memories of the past. I ask you to let me surround your life with protection, with care, and sympathy, and devoted love, which will never fail you, in thought, or word, or deed, till life itself shall cease! May, think—think of the future—the long years of loneliness, if you remain unmarried—the days when health and strength may fail, and there shall be none to tend or comfort you, death even finding you alone, without one to cherish your memory when you are gone. Do not attempt, with that tender nature, to brave the chill and gloom of a loveless life; come into my heart, my precious May, and let it be at least a shelter to you from the bitterness of solitude you were never made to bear!"

As he ceased to speak, May suddenly broke away from him, for he had laid his hand gently on her shoulder, and, rushing to the grassy bank which bounded one side of the road, she flung herself upon it, face downwards, and burst into a passion of tears.

Fleming sat down beside her, with a look of intense pain on his face, and took her hands in his. "Darling May," he said, "this is worse than death to me. I have hurt—I have wounded you."

"No, no," she said through her choking sobs; "it is for you, and for myself, that my heart seems torn—for you, that such priceless love and devotion should be given in vain; and for myself, that I cannot take advantage of it as I long to do. Yes, as I long to do," she repeated, sitting up, and lifting her sorrowful eyes to Fleming's face; "for I know that all you have said is true, and I do dread the lonely life, the loveless

future, as you have described them, with an unspeakable terror and foreboding. Oh, how gladly would I escape from them by flinging myself on such a heart as yours, if only it were possible to me! but it is not—it never can be. You have a right to know the truth, and I will tell it to you, however humiliating it may be to me." She hid her burning face in her hands as she went on: "Dr. Fleming, I have once loved Sydney Leigh—I love him still—I shall love him for ever. Not now, you will believe me, in any way unsuited to him as the husband of another woman, but so that I can never be the wife of any other man—never—never! I have no wish ever to see him again in this world, for I know it is better for myself that I should not; but my heart is true to him as in the first day of its full allegiance, and I will bear the name of no other man on earth."

"Thank you for telling me the truth, dear May," said Fleming, in a tone of deep emotion, "and forgive me for having caused you this pain."

"Ah, if you talk of forgiveness," said May, with a heavy sigh, "what might I not say to you! The sense of the injury I have done you will be a grief to me all my life."

"No, no!" exclaimed Fleming, "that were indeed to punish me cruelly for my presumption. Let all this be forgotten between us, May; you shall never hear another word on the subject from me as long as I live. Take me back as your friend, dear child, will you not?" he continued, with a somewhat sad smile. "Let me be once more what I have always been—your father's old friend and yours. Give me this title fully and freely, dearest May, and I will ask no better."

"You have it heartily, entirely, you know it well," said May, putting her hand in his.

"And you will not let my folly to-day keep you back from me? You must promise me this—you will make use of me as your friend without a shadow of restraint, will you not?"

"Yes, indeed, I will—only too gladly," said May; "you have always been my first and kindest friend, and I am thankful to know that you will be so still."

He stooped down and kissed her hand. "Then here I take leave of you for the present," he said. "When we meet again I trust this half hour will have been blotted out of your memory altogether."

She looked up at him with a grateful smile, and, without waiting for another word, he turned and walked towards the station with such rapid strides that he had soon passed completely out of her sight.

When he had quite disappeared, May rose, with a deep sigh, and moved slowly homewards.

CHAPTER XLIII.

MORE than a fortnight had elapsed since Dr. Fleming's visit to Combe Bathurst, and May was seated as usual at that hour in the girls' school, busily

engaged in teaching the little class that sat in a semicircle round her. It was a warm summer day, and she felt the heat rather oppressive as the children crowded upon her in their eagerness to hear the story of Cain, which she was telling them in very simple words. She looked pale and fatigued, and more than once put her hand somewhat wearily to her head; but suddenly the lesson was interrupted by the unexpected entrance of Stevens bringing a telegram, which had just arrived at the house for May.

She opened it hastily and found that it was from Dr. Fleming, and that it contained these words—

"Mrs. Sydney Leigh is dangerously ill. Her husband is absent on the Continent. She is alone with servants, and entreats you to come to her."

In an instant May had started from her seat, and making her way through the crowd of children, she went to tell the schoolmistress that they must have a holiday for that day, at all events; and before her little pupils had time to recover from their surprise, she had disappeared from amongst them.

An hour later she was in the train on her way to London. It was the same journey she had made little more than a year before with her aunt and Sydaey—her own Sydney then, from whom she believed that death alone could part her. How rich had she seemed at that time in love and hope! and now her aunt's warm heart was cold in the ashes of the grave, and the hopes that had been centred in the idol of her heart had turned to bitterness and desolation. Yet as May looked up to the serene blue sky which shone so pure and unchanging over the varied scenes through which she was swiftly passing, and thought of the Eternal Love, which ever broods as steadfast and immovable over each fitful mortal life, how wayward soever be its course, she felt that she would not exchange the peace with which she rested now, in those everlasting arms, for all the wondrous happiness she believed would have been hers as the wife of Sydney Leigh.

Late in the afternoon she reached London, and found Dr. Fleming waiting for her at the station with his carriage; he had calculated the earliest hour when she could arrive, and feeling certain that she would respond to his summons without an hour's delay, came to meet her in full confidence of her appearance.

He greeted her warmly, showing none of the constraint which she feared he might have retained from their last painful interview, and so soon as they were seated in the carriage, he gave her a detailed account of Mrs. Leigh's illness in answer to her eager inquiries.

It seemed that Sydney had left his wife only a week previously for Dresden, where he meant to remain about a fortnight; he had gone somewhat reluctantly, though there was nothing to alarm him in her state of health at the time, but being herself unable to travel, she had been very anxious that he

should have a little change; and she had remained quite happy and contented at home up to the previous day, when the unfortunate accident had occurred which caused her illness. She had gone out to drive as usual in her open carriage, but on her way to the Park, a runaway horse, which had thrown its rider, dashed up in front of her own pair, and so frightened and excited them that they began to plunge and kick furiously; the crowd which collected alarmed them still more, and taking the bit in their teeth they had started off full gallop, and after going some little distance at a most dangerous pace, ended by hurling the carriage against a lamp-post, where a policeman managed to stop them without Irene having been thrown out, which had seemed almost inevitable. The shock and terror were, however, too much for her, delicate as she was. She was taken very ill as soon as she could be conveyed home, and gave birth the same evening to a fragile little daughter, whom it seemed scarce likely she would live to welcome; for she was lying now in such a state of dangerous prostration that she was quite unconscious, and Dr. Fleming had very small hope that her life could be spared.

"The only chance of her surviving is the most careful and unremitting watching," he said. "She must have something in the shape of stimulant or nourishment every half hour, and yet if she is disturbed, or led into making the slightest exertion, she will die then and there, for her vitality is at the lowest possible ebb. The nurses who are with her can act well enough under orders, but it will require a keener intelligence, and a more devoted and disinterested care, than any ordinary hired attendant would be likely to show, to bring her safe through the next ten days. For this reason, May, I was thankful to be able to send for you. I know you will do all for her that a human being can do."

"Indeed I will," exclaimed May; "I shall be so delighted if I am able to be of use to her, poor child; but did you not say in your telegram, that she herself asked me to come; is she able to express a wish?"

"Not now; but this request she made when she felt her illness coming on. You know how timid she is, and how incapable of meeting any trial or difficulty without the help of some one on whom she can lean. In her first bewilderment of suffering and terror, she called out frantically for her husband, but when I gently reminded her that he was out of England, she turned her great blue eyes towards me with a wild imploring look, and exclaimed, 'Then send for May; do send for her, entreat her to come to me.'"

"Poor dear Irene! did she doubt that I would come to her only too gladly?"

"Perhaps it would not have been very wonderful if she had," said Fleming, looking kindly at May, as he saw how completely her generous heart ignored

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in that hour the fact that the sufferer she was so ready to tend, had been her successful rival. "But I had no doubt, as you see."

"And Sydney?" said May, with the tremulousness of tone which she was never able to conquer in uttering that name; "I conclude you have sent for him?"

"Of course, but I fear it is quite a chance whether my telegram reaches him. I believe him to be at Dresden, but I am not certain, and I do not know his address in the least. Mrs. Leigh was too much confused and terrified to tell it to me, even if she knew it, so that all I could do was to telegraph to the postmaster there, and beg him, if possible, to communicate with Leigh; in any case it must be some days before he can be here."

May could not help feeling that, so far as she herself was concerned, it was a great relief to hear this, for she dreaded, more than words could say, the prospect of seeing Sydney Leigh. This, and this alone, had made it an effort to her to come to Irene, and she was thankful now to be able to hope that perhaps she might avoid a meeting with him altogether. It was possible, if he did not return for some time, that Irene might be sufficiently recovered to be left in his care alone, and to dispense with her services, so that she could return home on his arrival.

"Is the poor little infant alive?" she asked Dr. Fleming, as the carriage drew up to the door of the Leighs' house.

"Yes, and likely to live, I am glad to say, though it is small and delicate; it is in the care of a very good nurse, so you need not give yourself any trouble about it; you will have quite enough to do with Mrs. Leigh. How is she?" he hastily asked of the servant who opened the door.

"They think her worse, of anything, sir; the nurse has been down ever so often to see if you were come."

"Now look here," said the doctor, turning to May, with the decision and abruptness which always characterised him when engaged in his professional duties, "you will go and take off your bonnet, and have some tea, and make yourself ready to begin the

care of your patient at once, for I do not think you will be willing to leave her room when you have once entered it. I will stay with her till you come, and will send a nurse to show you the way through the house."

May obeyed without a word, for she knew the doctor was quite imperative in his own domain; but she was soon ready, and, with a beating heart, followed the servant who had been sent to guide her to the sick-room.

"Dr. Fleming said I was to call him out when you came, if you please, ma'am," whispered the woman, when they reached the door, and, opening it very softly, she made a sign to which the doctor at once responded.

He came out with a step noiseless and light as that of a woman, and, drawing May into a window of the passage, he proceeded to give her the most minute directions as to the management of the patient until he should return at midnight, when he meant to see her again.

"She is weaker," he said, "and I have very little hope that we shall be able to save her ultimately, from the extreme delicacy of her constitution, even if we can keep her alive for a time; but, humanly speaking, May, it will depend as much upon you as on me."

May did not answer, but there was a look in her deep earnest eyes, as they met those of Fleming, which told him that if with the sacrifice of her own life she could save that of Sydney's wife, she would be ready at any hour to give it. He pressed her hand in silence, and then went his way out of the house, while May noiselessly opened the door, and passed into Irene's room.

A nurse who was seated near the bed rose on her entrance, and went softly out, for the doctor had told them all that he wished Mrs. Leigh to be left in Miss Bathurst's care entirely; and then May stole gently across the room, and stood for a few moments, motionless and silent, looking down upon the wife of Sydney Leigh.

(To be continued.)

GLEN KEVOC.

A SONNET.

AFTER a score of years I see again,
Kevoc, thee wakening to the touch of Spring;
Again descends upon thy blossoming
That twofold blessing of the mist and rain,
And sunshine bids thee not await in vain
The glory of so crowning-sweet a thing
As makes thy flowers to bloom, thy birds to sing,

And spring delight take place of winter pain.
Thus wakes my heart, with Life's young life astir—
Sought I not Love above thy shaggy steep,
Vowing to track her wheresoe'er she would?
Ev'n so, through all the years I follow Her;
O'er all the crags of life my course I keep,
So I may gain, at last, the Pure and Good.

DEATH'S SHADOWS.—I.

BY THE REV. CANON BATEMAN, M.A., VICAR OF MARGATE

AT one season of the Christian year the death and passion of our blessed Lord, the great High Priest of our profession, arrests the attention and fixes the gaze of the whole body of the faithful. Wherever, throughout the habitable globe, Christianity has planted her foot and told her story—whether in Palestine, where first her voice was heard, or in the sunny regions beyond, where she still dwells in the tents of Shem, and carries on her holy war with idolatry and superstition—whether in the far West, where as a mighty flood she was borne, almost unchecked and with resistless power, over the boundless prairies and wondrous rivers of a new world—whether in Europe, where the Church universal has made known her sacred seasons and symbols amongst all its nations and tongues—or in Africa, whose dark robe has still a fringe varied with spots of light, and telling of a brighter day—or amidst the countless islands of the sea, once hidden in darkness but now seeing the great light:—wherever amongst all these, in the North, South, East, or West, Christianity has gathered in her children, every eye at a certain season has been fixed on one central object—THE CROSS reared upon Mount Calvary.

From this great sacrifice offered by this great High Priest, the mind easily travels backward for three thousand years. The Law then given made "men high priests having infirmity;" they were not "suffered to continue by reason of death;" the sacrifices they offered were but typical of the "one great sacrifice once to be offered;" their head and representative in Aaron was but a prototype of Him that should come "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Mount Calvary is not far from Mount Hor; and it will be an easy transition, then, for us from the death of Christ to the death of Aaron.

I.—THE ENCAMPMENT.

The children of Israel were abiding in their tents at the foot of Mount Hor, hard by the coasts of the land of Edom. The King of Edom, forgetful of the tie of blood which bound him and his people, as descendants of Esau, to the Israelites as descendants of his twin-brother Jacob, had repulsed them from his coasts, and refused them bread and water and a passage through his border; so that they turned away from Kadesh disappointed, and came unto Mount Hor. The busy hum of life was pervading that vast encampment, the beasts, eased from their burdens, were driven out to find scant pasture, the prepara-

tion of the evening meal was going on, the old man rested from the fatigue of the sultry day, the young child gambolled at his feet; whilst from within the curtains of the sacred tabernacle, where Priests and Levites ministered, and upon which the cloud of the Divine Presence rested, there issued forth the sweet and softened notes of "thanksgiving, and the voice of melody" accompanying the evening sacrifice.

Suddenly those notes are checked, those voices cease. The noise of childhood is hushed. Old men's pale cheeks grow paler. Every step is arrested, every hand stayed, every eye fixed upon the steep and narrow path winding upwards towards the summit of the mountain which casts its broad shadow upon the plain beneath.

What see they there? What fixes every eye, and sends a thrill through every heart? Moses, the man of God, ascends the mount; and by his side walks God's high priest, attired as on days of high church festival, with breastplate, ephod, brodered coat, and girdle. Moses treads firmly. His eyes are not yet dim, nor is his natural strength abated. But the earthly house of Aaron's tabernacle is well-nigh dissolved. The keepers of the door tremble and the strong men bow themselves. He leans heavily upon the arm of his firstborn Eleazar; for he has run his race and finished his course, and he ascends the mount to die. For thus had God commanded: "The Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah. Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor: and strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there" (Numb. xx. 23-26).

These tidings spread, of necessity, throughout the host. When therefore the curtains of the tent were drawn aside, and the three came forth, began to ascend the mount, and disappeared from sight, all must have felt that the hour was come. The declining sun and lengthening shadows alone could reveal the transactions on the mountain-top, hidden as they were from all beneath by its mighty shoulders. On the valley at its foot, broadcast, the shadowy group would be reproduced; God's representative transferring from father to son the symbols of the priestly office, authority, and succession; the brother bidding farewell to his only brother, as four short months before to his only sister, and henceforth to tread the wilderness

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alone, a solitary grand man; no burial spoken of or needed, for the priesthood still lived, with authority to check idolatry and to break up golden calves; no tears shed, for God's will was known, and God's will once really known to his true servants, brings both obedience and acquiescence! What a feeling of awe must have thrilled through all before whose eyes these transactions, passing up heavenwards, were repeated in trembling shadowy movements upon earth! Truly might this "Mosera," at the foot of Mount Hor, be henceforth called the "valley of the shadow of death!"

And now, as Moses and Eleazar alone descend the path, up which three had so lately ascended, the wailing cry of Judah's daughters is upraised, and sorrow and sighing spread throughout the many thousands of Israel. For thirty days no tent was struck, no work performed, no movement made throughout the camp, in token of deep grief that Aaron the great high priest and the anointed servant of the Lord is dead.

II.—REMINISCENCES.

These reminiscences look back to two events, somewhat alike, which occurred at Massah and Meribah. They are referred to in several parts of the Pentateuch and the Psalms, and are conjoined in the last blessing conferred on the tribe of Levi by the dying lawgiver. "Of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah" (Dent. xxxiii. 8). The last event seems more especially connected with the sentence passed on Aaron and with his death; though, both conjoined, barred against him the promised land.

In the first month of the fortieth year of the wanderings of the children of Israel, they were encamped, even the whole congregation, in the desert of Zin. There was no water; and they gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron. Now begin these sorrowful reminiscences. Many trials of faith and patience had been endured before; but obeying God's command, he had given them a happy issue out of all. But now faith failed, now patience was exhausted, now temper prevailed.

God bade them "speak to the rock:" they "smote it twice." Notwithstanding the "chiding of the people," God spoke of them as the "congregation," they called them "rebels." God would reserve the honour due unto his great name; they take the honour to themselves—"Must we fetch you water out of the rock?"

We see how God's work is often spoiled by man's way of doing it. And in the present case there was much to make God angry, which does not appear on the surface of things. There was a hidden meaning (hidden let us hope from Moses

and Aaron) in this smitten rock—"that Rock was Christ." The "supplies" from it were figurative. The "drink" from it was spiritual. In God's sight, unto whom all his works are known from the beginning of the world, this scene in the wilderness was a rehearsal of what took place in after years at Gethsemane and Golgotha before Pilate and on the cross; the smiting of the rock in anger was like the blow given in the hall of judgment, which called forth the meek reproach, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, but if well, why smitest thou me?" the honour claimed by man was like adding human merit to the finished work of God's only begotten Son; the hard words spoken to thirsty souls were like barriers set up to the free course of the Gospel. We may think the sin small, but it involves much of what we still see following—the mal-administration of the Gospel, and the wounding of Christ in the house of his friends.

God's ministers often "smite" when they should "speak;" they sometimes say, "Hear now, ye rebels," when they should say, "We beseech you in Christ's stead." They get angry because, in spite of all they say, men will not repent and do works meet for repentance; because God's house is still unfrequented, God's day unhonoured, God's book unread. They have preached and warned. They have given line upon line, and precept upon precept. They have "borne and had patience," and yet they seem to have laboured in vain and spent their strength for nought. The intemperate man still loves strong drink. The profane man still swears. The adulterer still hunts the precious life. The Sabbath-breaker still takes his pleasure on the holy day. The murmurer still complains. The sceptic still doubts. The wicked man still refuseth to do what "is lawful and right." And "do I not well to be angry," says the minister of God, "when I see such things as these?" Ah! so said Aaron; but it brought sad reminiscences at another day. No; let God smite if he will, but not man. If he forbears, man may well hold his peace. Anger rarely attains its object. An angry sermon rarely does good. It is man that says, "ye rebels," not God. There was an Indian chaplain once who ministered at a station where the military commandant was an ungodly and irreverent man. The chaplain was sorely troubled, and spread the case before one in authority. The ungodliness was manifested habitually, it appeared all the week through; the irreverence especially on the Lord's day and in his house. And the more vehement the preaching and reproofs, the more manifest was the irreverence—the more bitter the sneer or smile—the more determined the folding of the arms, and finally the more elevated the feet up upon the pew front! Was this to be tolerated?

The counsel given was, that since one way had

been tried—the “rebel” way—and failed, it would be wise at least to try another. The problem to be solved was, *how to get the feet down?* Personalities and denunciations had failed, what if gentleness and forbearance were tried for a time?

The counsel was taken in good part; and in three months a letter was received by the counsellor, couched in these few words: “I have tried your plan: the *feet have come down.*”

And as with the ministry of the Word, so with its professors. They also often spoil God’s work, by mixing their own with it, or doing it their own way. Thus Saul destroys the Amalekites in obedience to God’s commands, but he saves the best of the flocks and herds to please and benefit himself. Thus Jonah enters Nineveh as a messenger of God’s anger; but then goes and builds himself a booth outside the city, where he sits fretting at God’s forbearance. God often has to inquire of his servants—“What doest thou here, Elijah?” They have their commission and their work given

them to do; but who would ever expect them to be sitting brooding in a cave? They are put in trust with the Gospel; who would ever expect to see them entangled in some envious web of their own spinning? The outward danger in such cases is the more apparent: but the inward is the more subtle. The one may involve a separation from the faithful, a desponding and hopeless view of things; but the other involves often a double smiting of the Rock, a forgetfulness that all our sufficiency is of God alone, and a mingling of our own merits with the finished work of Christ. The evil here is as secret as it is subtle. It is out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh. It is from thence the words proceed: “Must we fetch you water from the Rock?” These things brought sorrowful reminiscences to Aaron’s mind when he was about to die; and they will bring sorrowful reminiscences to all who spoil God’s work in doing it.

(To be concluded.)

THE TROUBLES OF CHATTY AND MOLLY.

CHAPTER XIII.

“**A**NY letter for me yet, Molly?” asked Chatty, as the door opened.

“No, miss.”

“Oh, dear me! where’s Maria? Oh, there you are. No letter for me yet, Maria?”

“No, and I wish the letters were at Jericho! George Baylis has been, and would not even stay a couple of hours—of course through you—and every one’s as cross as possible. I’m sure I wish you had never seen Harold Greyson.”

“I never felt so wretched in my life,” she thought, as she took off her bonnet. “I’ll have my revenge on the world generally by snubbing Dr. Morton Denby within an inch of his life.”

She did too, making the poor little man feel quite uncomfortable, declaring she was tired of his favourite songs, and maintaining the opposite of every opinion he ventured to express.

“I want to persuade mamma to dine at five instead of two,” she said, as she poured out the tea; “then we should alter our tea hour from six to half-past eight, and do away with supper.”

“It would spoil the former as a social meal, though,” he answered, thinking he should miss the pleasant little teas and suppers by that arrangement.

“Yes; but you see it would make it so much nicer for our friends. They could drop in about seven, and take a cup of tea with us without the trouble of formally sitting down to table. I wish you had come yesterday instead of to-day, Dr. Denby; we had

some delicious fruit sent up from the country, but it is all gone now.”

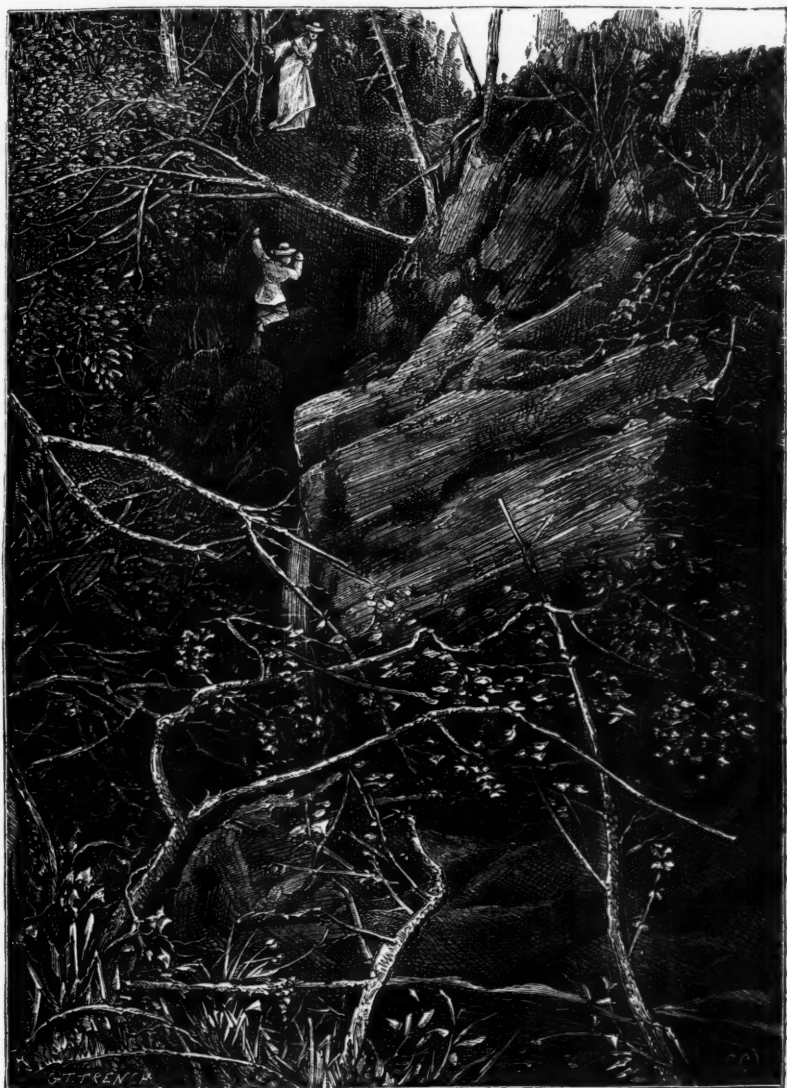
“Indeed,” he said, not deriving any particular gratification from the announcement.

“Emily, dear,” she exclaimed, her face suddenly lighting up, for she heard the postman’s knock next door, “do pass Dr. Denby some biscuits. There’s the postman at our door—for papa, I suppose—for me! Thank you, Molly,” and she slipped it into her pocket and looked radiant. “I don’t think mamma will consent to the late-dinner movement, you know, Dr. Denby,” she said beamingly, while she wondered how soon it would be possible to escape. “She does not at present seem quite to see it, do you, mamma?” and she fondled the envelope in her pocket. “I don’t think it can be very long,” she thought; “I’m certain there’s not more than one sheet in it.”

Then tea ended, and they sat and talked, and Emily played, and presently the Prawn arrived, and still, from very self-consciousness, she had not the courage to get up and leave the room to read her letter.

After a little time she thought of Mrs. Spink, and how she had tormented her, whilst flitting about the room, picking off the dead leaves and running her fingers over the keys of the piano. The dead leaves gave her a notion.

“Do you know, mamma,” she said, “the plants in the dining-room look half dead from heat and dust? I don’t believe they are ever attended to; I think I’ll go and water them myself,” and glad of an opportunity to escape, she told Molly to bring her



(Drawn by C. J. LAWSON.)

"Sought I not Love above thy shaggy steep?"—p. 725.

some water, and went into the dining-room, and, shutting the door, pulled out her letter. Anxious as she was to read it, however, she went up to the flowers for a moment. "Poor thirsty things," she said; "you are quite parched. I don't believe the fine weather will last much longer, though; there's a little black cloud in the sky. I wonder if it is the herald of the big black ones behind it. Molly, you water the flowers; I want to read my letter," and she sat down in an easy chair and opened it at last.

Somehow, it disappointed and chilled her. It was not cold nor unkind—quite the contrary; but still there was something in it that made it seem as if his head had dictated it rather than his heart. He was going into the country for a fortnight, and had not time enough to wish her good-bye; but he did not say how sorry he was he could not do so, only that she was not to be disappointed.

"Our letters have crossed," she said. "Thank you, Molly, that will do for the flowers. I shall sit here a little while in the twilight. My head aches rather, and I can hear the piano in the drawing-room, and I can imagine Prawn keeping time. I don't suppose they will want me. Shut the door, Molly," and she was alone, with the letter screwed tightly in her hand. "If Harold only loved me as George Baylis does," she said again.

An hour afterwards Chatty had not reappeared, so it occurred to Maria that she would go and look for her, and she found her in the dark, softly crying to herself, with her face hidden in the cushions of the chair.

"Chatty," she said, "why, what is the matter with you, darling? You used to be so merry."

"Nothing," said Chatty, telling a fib, "only I watered the flowers, and saw a little black cloud in the sky, and wondered how far the storm was behind it, and then I sat down, and— I am so foolish, dear," and she turned and kissed her sister, and wished for one moment she had never seen Harold Greyson. "No, I don't," she said instantly; "I could never wish that."

"Where have you been?" asked Emily, as the two girls entered the drawing-room, and Maria went back to the piano and the Prawn took his usual station close by her.

"Watering the flowers."

"You found those flowers very attractive, Miss Chatty," observed the doctor, with a vague idea of being funny.

"I did not suppose I should be missed," she replied, a little gravely. "Tom," she said, as an aside to the Irrepressible, "there's Maria positively playing that everlasting piece again."

"Ah!" said Dr. Denby, looking through his music and answering her remark with a vague idea of being agreeable; "fishing for compliments, Miss Chatty."

"Maria's fishing for a Prawn," said the Irrepressible, returning her aside.

"I think I shall vanish," she said presently to Emily. "I don't want to hear Dr. Denby murder 'Vivi Tu' any longer; besides, I can't stand papa's severe looks to-night; and I believe I shall break down if I stay."

She went down-stairs for a moment, avowedly to ask for a glass of water, but really because she wanted to relieve her mind by a word or two with Molly.

"Molly! Molly! where are you? Oh, there you are! What are you doing at the top of the area-steps, pray?"

"I was only getting a breath of fresh air, miss."

"Don't tell stories; you were talking to Richard. There's no harm in that, but don't tell stories, Molly; being deceitful doesn't answer. I speak from experience," and she laughed.

"No, Miss Chatty, I know it doesn't."

"Well—give me a glass of water—and what does Richard say?"

"Why, miss, he wants me to—to think about giving a month's warning."

"Going to be married, Molly?"

"Well, miss, you see he's anxious to be settled."

"So glad. I shall be sorry to lose you, Molly, but it is setting a good example. I only hope it may be followed—I shall go to bed now. I don't think they are likely to ask for me, but if they should, say I felt tired, and could not sit up any longer," and she went up-stairs. "Molly," she asked, turning back, "suppose Richard went away for a fortnight without wishing you good-bye, should you be angry?"

"No, miss," she answered slowly; "I should know he would have, if he could."

"Surely I can be as trusting as Molly," thought Chatty, as she went up-stairs again; "I dare say he would have wished me good-bye if he could."

Two months later Molly was married. Chatty went to the church to witness the ceremony, and promised to go and see her when she was settled; and Maria made her a wonderful cake, iced all over in the most astounding manner. Altogether, Molly's spinsterhood was most satisfactorily wound up, and Mr. and Mrs. Walbrook went for a week's honeymoon at Margate, looking marvels of new clothes, and thoroughly contented with themselves and each other.

"You see," said Chatty to Maria, "you only miss an excellent domestic in Molly, but I have lost one of my strongest adherents. I knew her so well that she was not like an ordinary servant. I shall pay Mrs. Walbrook a visit as soon as my walking powers are in sufficient order to take me to Camden Town."

When she went, she found Molly's pleasant face looking brighter than ever, and her little home neat, and clean, and nice. Richard had lost his mother soon after he commenced courting, and Molly was sole mistress of the small establishment.

"I am sure I almost envy her," said Chatty, on her return. "People make such a fuss about money. I think marrying a poor man very much better than marrying a rich one, if you only make up your mind to it. As for love flying out of the window when poverty comes in at the door, I don't believe it. You depend much more on each other for happiness when the world has not been so mightily generous."

"Noble sentiments nobly delivered," said the Irrepressible, loftily.

"Noble nonsense," said Chatty; "how absurd you are! but I don't care what you say. I believe in love in a cottage, with woodbine all over it, and bird-cages outside the windows, and a garden, with all the flowers carefully tied up with sticks, and little wooden tickets underneath with the names written on, so that the ignorant may acquire botanical knowledge gratis." and Chatty laughed at her own small wit.

"You must have learnt that speech by heart," said the Irrepressible; "you could never have com-

posed it on the spot. Why don't you continue the advantages? Smoky chimneys within, and swarms of caterpillars from the woodbine without, which crawl in when you open the window to let the smoke escape, and a neighbourhood well populated with cats, which knock down your flowers, sticks and all; and one of you in a bad temper, and the house so small the other can't get out of the way. Delightful! My speech is almost as eloquent as yours, Chatty."

"I wish you wouldn't be so horribly philosophical," she said, getting cross.

"I'm not philosophical; I am only matter-of-fact. You should consult your dictionary, my dear child," he continued, blandly; "you don't know the meanings of words."

"Dictionary, indeed!" she replied indignantly; "I never think of such a thing."

"No, I know you don't;" so the Irrepressible had the best of it, and went out of the room triumphant.

(To be continued.)

A WORD UPON VALUABLES.

BY THE REV. W. M. STATHAM.

TAKE care of the valuables!" Who has not heard that injunction given? Almost everybody has some valuables, the humble cottager as well as the wealthy peer. Some precious little heirlooms are to be found in the possession of poor men; something that reminds them of the days of their fathers; something which gold could not purchase from them. Exactly. It is good for men and nations to have much in the past to reverence. Take care of the valuables; whether it be the merchant-prince sending his plate and jewels to the banker's safe, or the village swain guarding some precious gift of other days. The valuables! And yet this suggests the question, what are they? That depends upon taste, age, culture, experience. If the house were on fire, a child would rather preserve the doll's house and the toys than any other things—unquestionably; and an antiquarian would make a rush for the old scrolls and coins; and a tradesman would look out for his ledgers; and a lazy parson would make a furious grab at his manuscript sermons (though these latter, if they are quoted fairly in the market, can scarcely be called valuables just now). However, the fact remains; character, culture, and general liking decide for men what are valuables.

Things too, be it remembered, are valuable to a man at a certain era in his history which are not of much account at another. Bad carvings and paintings can be borne with up to a certain stage

of culture, and then they begin to be unlovely, and at last intolerable. He smiles at himself as he thinks that he once desired to secure them, and was exceedingly pleased at the possession of them.

Some things have a mere conventional value. We set store by them, not because they furnish us with any special delight, but because it is the "proper thing" to be interested in them. In plants, it sometimes happens that tulips are valuable, sometimes orchids. In jewellery, sometimes coral is *in*, sometimes it is altogether "out." In many ways the market fluctuates and changes, and the valuables are represented by a very different set of figures under those three captivating letters, £ s. d. Some things have a seasonal value. A yacht will fetch more as summer-time comes on, and the price of fur rises with the frost.

Some things are valuable always; and the most valuable possessions which any man can hold are, a good conscience—good hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ—friendship with God, and a title to the inheritance of the saints in light. All these possessions are precious to the soul which can enter into and enjoy them. The soul itself is the most valuable thing to any man. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

These facts admitted, we shall have no difficulty in showing the application of the idea, take care of the valuables; do not barter conscience for cus-

tom, justice for greed, honour for ease, nor heaven for earth. We are apt to think gold and diamonds more valuable than the invisible things of a man—peace, probity, and purity; but load the scales with all the jewellery of New Bond Street, and they kick the beam when a soul is put into the balance. Take care of the valuables. There are plenty of people trampling diamonds under their feet as though they were dross, and grinding the pearls of price to powder as they press on after material things!

Many things rise into great value in emergencies. A life-buoy in a storm; a cup of cold water in the desert, or in the vessel when the last drop is gone. To the parched and fevered lips one glass of clear crystal water would be more precious than though the cup were filled high with gold. I remember travelling with a child, who asked me at the station what the light was for in the carriage roof. When the tunnel came the little one knew; and so many things rise into value when the emergency comes. To know that the Redeemer liveth is a blessing that others think perhaps lightly of now. What is the use of the light? But when we come to the valley of the shadow of death, how precious it will be! No need then to cry with Goethe, "Light—more light!"

Take care of the valuables: you cannot regain them. Your gold watch is soon melted into ore; your pearl-set brooch is soon broken up; your own individual owner's trace is soon gone; and, apart from thievery, many a man who has parted with his valuables in some foolish hour, or some sad one of necessity, would give treble their actual worth to regain them. The ring belonged to a dead mother: the brooch has in it the likeness of a dear friend. Yes; but they have gone out now into the wide sea of a many millioned people, and to light upon your valuables again would be almost a miracle. They might, perchance, by some extraordinary luck, be regained. Some valuables, however, cannot. True, we may be pardoned and absolved by the great mercy of the Redeemer; but a lie is a lie for ever, and an injustice is irrevocable. We have bartered fidelity for folly, and we can never regain our lost word.

Take care of the valuables. The love and esteem of others are such. None can prize them too highly. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver or gold." The respect and esteem of others can only be measured at their true value when men have lost them. Then it is that they feel conscious of the exceeding preciousness of that which cannot be regained by clever dexterity, or financial successes, or friendly intervention. Slowly and steadily only can people regain their lost standing in human society. The fragrance and aroma that a good character breathes forth are the

result of a growth and not of an effort; and not until the tree be made good again will the apple-blossoms appear or the fruit abound.

Take care of the valuables. Health and elasticity of spirit are such. Excesses may not seem at first to injure the body, and incessant task-work is for a considerable time borne by the brain; but the reaction comes. Not always can the excitement continue; and then come dulness, depression, nervous irritability, and ills that cannot be defined. Due care and rest might have prevented such calamities—no doubt of it; and men fly to medicines to restore a system, which as it takes time to enervate, so time is also wanted to nerve and re-tone it. Health is just one of those things that men mourn the loss of most bitterly. What are prosperity, and libraries, and pleasure-grounds, if the owner's head and heart are sick? Let us be wise in time. True, indeed, health may be constitutionally weak; in the providence of God we may be called upon to suffer, and then submission is our duty, and may be developed by God's grace in the least submissive of us all—but so far as personal care is concerned, is it not true that men are often reckless concerning health because they have never known the bitter sorrow which the loss of it involves?

Take care of the valuables. Such are true friendship and family affection. The best blessings of this life grow in our own vineyards and corn-fields. "Why art thou digging here?" says the Arab to the Eastern who had wandered far from Palestine; "the soil is hard, and the wild beasts haunt the rocks." "Why?" says the Eastern; "this is the treasure-ground—a lost city is buried here; the Ethiopian merchants who come this way told the secret." "Haste thee and flee," says the Arab; "the gold lies in *thine own field*." In *thine own field*. Would that we all knew and felt that. How valuable is home; how blessed a place to rest in when the hour of sickness comes; to be understood in, when the season of misconception comes; to joy in whilst living, and at last to fall "on sleep" in. Yes; take care of the valuables. The outside world may be an exceedingly stimulating and entertaining place whilst the sky is bright; but life is not all sunshine—let us remember that.

Of course, if people can persuade themselves that diamonds are paste; that the great immortal powers within them are only materialistic affairs; and that the brain is everything—their very thoughts being the result of what they eat—then they can sell their birthright for a mess of pottage without much inconvenience or loss. But they must first of all thus persuade themselves; and this is a much more difficult attainment than men imagine. It is hard work believing a lie. Wonderful indeed must the process of persuasion be which induces a man to claim brotherhood with the

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rocks. I say persuasion—for surely reason can never so stultify itself as to conceive of thought without a soul to think. The fool—or, as the Hebrew has it, “the withered thing”—says there is no God. And next to saying THERE IS NO GOD, is the saying, THERE IS NO MAN; and take away natural immortality, and in the highest sense there is no man—only a pile of dust! Some men are trying to reason natural immortality out of the theological world just now. We are bold to say to them, Take care of the valuables; you do not know how precious a being man is. It scarcely falls within the scope of this paper to show how

valuable things may best be cared for. After meditation, study of Scripture, and exercises of devotion, men must in highest matters decide for themselves as in the sight of God: and concerning these valuables which are precious to us in a human sense common sense will go far in the decision how to avoid the sacrifice of health and friendship. In these days, too, it pre-eminently behoves us to reverence all that is good in the past whilst pressing forward in our endeavours after higher good. Nations and men have much reason to consider the motto we have been treating about in this paper—TAKE CARE OF THE VALUABLES!

THE THRUSH.

A SPRING RECOLLECTION.



WEET bird of spring,
Sit on thy bending spray,
This breezy day,
And sing!

Sing, cheery heart,
That all the winter long,
Harbouring no song,
Apart

In deserts bleak
Hast flitted, hunger-bit,
Forlorn of wit,
To seek

Hard bushes where
Some shrivelled berry stays;
Or in the ways,
So bare,

A morsel hast
Snatched up with sudden glee,
Which Charity
Had cast.

Sit on thy spray,
Under the warm spring shower,

This genial hour
Of day!

Sing, merry voice!
Never a gladder bird
Bright Spring hath heard
Rejoice.

A fount of glee
O'erflows thy throbbing heart;
Thou, of Nature part,
Dost see

A glory fill
The wakening spirit of Earth,
A bright new birth
Of will!

I too with thee
This bond of joy can find.
Yet in my mind
Foresee

A spring of bliss,
Whose palest dawning ray
Outshines high day
Of this!

H. G. TOMKINS.

GRANDPAPA'S LESSON.



H! here is grandpapa at last; I thought he never would come—certainly I shall not be sorry to get home, after the dull afternoon I have had;” and Lucy Seaton, a little girl of about eleven years old, as she uttered this not over-polite speech, came away from her post at the window, and proceeded to tie on her sealskin hat, and to draw on the warm jacket which lay on the table beside her.

Now, though Lucy spoke those words in a low

voice, and did not address them to any of her companions in particular, she fully intended that they should be heard, and that they should convey to her listeners, that she had been very much dissatisfied with the amusements of the day.

Nor did her friends seem to be in better sorts than she was herself. Flora and Emma Hargrove, the children of the house, at which Lucy had been only spending the day, were standing on the hearth-rug, opposite the fire, looking sadly enough into the blaze.

Fanny and Grace Day, schoolfellows of theirs, and friends also of Lucy Seaton, were walking silently hand in hand round a half-dismantled Christmas-tree, while two other little girls, younger than the rest, were seated in a distant window, turning over the pages of a large scrap-book, and whispering their remarks to each other in a cautious undertone.

Altogether, they were not a cheerful party, though what had caused their discontent it would not have been easy to discover at a glance.

True, it was a cold and cheerless afternoon out of doors, with a bleak wind whistling round the corners of the street, and shaking the newly-fallen snow from the trees in the square opposite, but in-doors there were warm carpets, warm curtains, and a blazing fire glowing on rosy cheeks. The poor little children outside might have a good excuse for sad looks, as their bare feet pattered along over the frozen pavement, leading them back to homes where there were no fires to warm them, or no food to satisfy their hunger; but Lucy and her friends had not this excuse to offer.

Neither could they have complained that the reason of their remaining thus idle and unoccupied was that there was any lack of something to amuse them, for books and toys and games of all kinds lay scattered in profusion over the tables and chairs, and even on the floor. No, this was not it. The real cause of their silence and gloomy inaction we may perhaps discover, if we watch Lucy Seaton for a little longer, and follow her and her grandpapa on their way home. The last glove was on, and the veil was tied closely across her face, when, after rapping with his stick against the door, the old gentleman entered the room.

"Well, young ladies," he said, cheerily, as he came in, and shook hands with them all one after the other, "how are you to-day? tired with your play, eh?" he inquired, as at a glance his quick eye saw that something had gone wrong. "I thought Miss Lucy would dutifully have come to meet me at the door, and have saved me from mounting up these steep stairs, but I suppose blind man's buff, or something of that kind, had too great charms for her—was that it, little one, eh?" and as he spoke he turned with a smile to where Lucy had solemnly taken up her position beside him, and pinched her sily on the cheek.

At Mr. Seaton's pleasant, heartfelt words the clouds seemed to clear away from off the brows of his little companions; the children in the window came from their retreat and spread their picture-book across his knees; Fanny and Grace left the Christmas-tree and perched themselves one on each arm of his chair, while Emma and Flora described to him the number of their presents and new-year's gifts.

And during all this time Lucy stood beside her grandpapa, awkward and ill at ease, till, as he got up at last and said good-bye, she gave an audible

sigh of relief and followed him quickly out of the room.

Lucy would probably have felt still more uncomfortable had she been able to peep back once again into that same room, ten minutes after her departure from it, and had she seen how much happier her friends were without her company; there was not a cross look now on any face, nor a sad one either, all seemed quite cheerful and gay. The candles on the Christmas-tree had been re-lighted, and after joining hands and dancing merrily round it two or three times, Emma and Flora proceeded to distribute among their friends the various articles which ornamented it.

But Lucy knew nothing of all this, as she walked along silently beside Mr. Seaton, slipping more than once on the slides made by thoughtless boys upon the pavement, till her grandpapa, taking her by the hand, roused her from her reverie as he said,

"Why, little girl, what has happened to you? Is your tongue quite frozen up that you have not a word to say to me—no account to give me of your afternoon? What did you all play at?"

"Different things," replied Lucy, shortly.

"Well, I suppose so," said Mr. Seaton, taking no notice of Lucy's unwillingness to answer him; "it would have been very dull to stay all the time over one game; but, how did the Christmas-tree go off—I saw a grand one standing at the end of the room?"

"It was a very grand one," replied Lucy, "and I should have liked very well to have got something off it, but the girls were so unkind about it, and managed it so badly, it all came to nothing."

"Why, how can that have been?" asked Mr. Seaton, much perplexed.

"Because—because Flora said I was unfair—at least, I said she was unfair in the way she gave out the numbers, and then she would not do it my way, and of course I wouldn't have it her way, and then I said I wouldn't play with them, they were so unkind—so they blew out all the candles again, and we had no tree."

This speech had not been made without the accompaniment of several sobs, and at the end the hot, long-restrained tears were running down her cheeks.

Mr. Seaton walked on in silence. He knew the Hargroves very well, and felt sure there could have been no real unkindness or unfairness on their parts; and he knew, too, alas! how often before now Lucy had brought much trouble on herself, by being cross and overbearing with her friends. He loved his little grandchild very dearly, and it grieved him deeply to see how small an effort she made to conquer this great fault.

Before long Lucy's wrath burst out again. "It was the same in everything. In blind man's buff I wanted to be blinded first, but Emma said that would not be fair to the others, and that I must wait till my turn came, and then on purpose they tried

not to catch me, till at last I went away altogether, and left them to finish their game without me; and it was just the same over again in hunt the slipper, and magic music, and everything we tried. It was the most horrid evening I ever spent, and I never felt so glad to see you before, grandpapa, as when I saw you coming to fetch me away."

Lucy squeezed Mr. Seaton's hand as she spoke, and looked up into his face for sympathy; but he did not return her glance, nor were her little fingers held more tightly than before within his own.

Lucy's account of the afternoon had been in a measure true. The Christmas-tree had been a failure; blind man's buff had ended in tears and angry words; magic music had failed to soothe the angry passions roused; and after a very short trial hunt the slipper had been given up in despair. And why? All because one foolish, selfish girl was of the party. One sulky face had spoilt all the fun; one little child's ill-temper had deprived not only herself, but all her friends, of an afternoon's pleasure.

All this Mr. Seaton understood almost as clearly as if he had been present at the children's party. Some of it he gathered from his own previous experience, the rest from the hurried words of vexation and complaint which fell from Lucy's lips during the remainder of the walk home; and it was with a grave enough face that, on reaching his house, he desired Lucy to run up-stairs and take her supper, adding that when his own dinner was over, she might come down and sit with him for a little before going to bed.

The little girl did as she was desired. Her supper was soon over, and there was a good time still to wait before the summons to her grandpapa would reach her. In this lull she began to think over the events of the day, more calmly than she had done before. Uncoloured by excitement, the scenes rose up before her one by one, her own ugly conduct showing prominently in them all, till, as the hot flush which had been on her cheek all day began to fade away, and the angry flicker in her eye to die out, she acknowledged to herself what a silly, wilful child she had been.

Mr. Seaton was seated in his arm-chair by the fire as she entered the dining-room, and at the pleasant prospect of a chat with him, all other thought passed out of Lucy's mind.

"Why, grandpapa," she said, as with one spring she placed herself upon his knee, "you were such a long time, I thought you had forgotten me. Now that I am here, however, I am going to be very happy and comfortable, only first"—and she kissed him as she spoke—"you must take that grave look off your face, and then I'll stir up the fire, and make a good blaze."

Mr. Seaton returned the kiss, and stroked Lucy's cheek lovingly. "Am I looking grave?" he said; "I did not know it; I was only thinking."

"Thinking—about what? Oh, do tell me," interrupted Lucy, as with a final twist she settled herself more comfortably, in expectation of hearing one of grandpapa's famous stories.

"Tell you what I was thinking of? Well, I will; only to-night, Lucy, instead of a story, I will try and teach you something—a lesson, which some way or other has got mixed up in my mind, along with the stories I keep there for my little girl. But, first, while I am putting on my considering cap, do you see what you can do to make the fire better than it is."

Lucy got down on to the rug, and began to poke at the sulky coals. It was not a hopeful-looking job, she thought, as the black smoke puffed out into her face, and the one little jet of flame there had been went out with a jump. But still she poked on, and raked the cinders from the lower bar, and with her grandpapa's help put in some pieces of paper very cunningly between the bars.

But it was of no use; the paper blazed up for a moment, and when it went out left the embers looking more dismal than before. The smoke went in heavy dull clouds up the chimney, and the room began to feel very chilly and uncomfortable.

By this time Lucy was quite weary; her cheeks ached with her efforts to kindle a flame, by blowing into the fire; she was tired of kneeling on the hard floor; and her fingers were very dirty, and covered with grits.

"Do you give it up, Lucy? Well, you have done your best. Now let me try, and you can watch me;" and as he spoke Mr. Seaton took the poker from her hand.

For a long time it seemed as if he were succeeding no better than she had done, as he poked and raked at the ashes perseveringly, and still there was no improvement. But at last he seemed quite satisfied, as, taking up the tongs, he said, "Now, Lucy, it is all right; watch and see what is going to happen."

Lucy stood and looked as though she expected to see some wonderful trick of conjuring, while Mr. Seaton, with some trouble, drew out from the centre of the fire a piece of dull black slate, and threw it down upon the hearth. Then it did seem almost like conjuring; for, as if glad to be rid of such bad company, the coals began to crackle in chorus, the flames jumped out laughingly from every corner of the grate to meet each other, and in a few minutes Lucy's cheeks were being toasted by the hot fire which was burning before her.

"That is splendid!" she cried exultingly. "Why, grandpapa, how clever you were to manage that, and to find out that sulky old slate. But who could ever think," she continued, "that one little slate could do so much mischief?"

"Who, indeed," replied Mr. Seaton, returning to his arm-chair, and drawing her towards him; "but

do you know, little girl, it is getting so late it is almost time for bed."

"No—no, not yet; please not yet; at least not till you tell me what the lesson is you want me to learn. I need not go till you have told me that."

"Well, then, here it is," said Mr. Seaton, slowly. "I want my little Lucy to learn that a slate in the fire is a very nasty uncomfortable thing, and that she will have to try not to turn into one."

"Me, grandpapa! how can I be like a slate, except, indeed, my fingers?" she continued, looking ruefully at the grimy fingers, and proceeding unceremoniously to wipe them on the sleeve of her grandpapa's coat.

"I will explain to you what I mean," he said. "You have just seen the way one little piece of slate could make this whole fire black, ugly, and useless, and you saw how brightly things went when it was taken away. Well," he continued, looking straight into Lucy's face, "I saw to-day a whole party of merry, happy little girls—or at least a party that should have been both merry and happy—made dull, melancholy, and completely wretched, all because, as far as I could understand, one little girl was among them putting out the bright fire of happiness with the ugly slate, which is made up of selfishness and ill-temper."

"I do not think I need mention the name of this little girl," he continued very kindly, as Lucy threw her arms round his neck, and burst into tears. "I think my darling knows all about it now, and can understand for herself what my lesson is. Yes, the Hargroves asked you to spend the afternoon with them, that you might all be happy together, but their cheerfulness was extinguished, their pleasure spoilt, because this discontented little spirit was among them, making them all miserable. Am I wrong in this? Ought the blame of to-day's misfortunes to be laid to Mary's account or yours?"

"It was my fault; I know it was, and I am so sorry. I did not think about making them unhappy."

"I am sure you did not think; but remember, Lucy, even a child such as you are can make a great difference in the happiness of those around her. You are very young, and sometimes very foolish still; but when you try, no one can be a pleasanter companion than you can. I have often called you my little sunbeam. I hope I may never have to call you, or that other people may have to say that you are like, an ugly slate."

And then, while Lucy hid her face on his shoulder, Mr. Seaton showed her *how* she ought to try, and in whose strength she could conquer her fault. He showed her how Christ likes his little ones to be gentle, kind, and loving to one another, and Lucy listened, and grandpapa's lesson fell deep into her heart, so that, by degrees, she earned the right to be

called a sunbeam by all her friends, bringing light and happiness with her wherever she went, and no thought of her being like an ugly, black slate, ever entered into their minds.

Z. P.

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

241. From what circumstances mentioned in the Gospels may we infer that Joseph, husband of Mary, died during our Lord's sojourn on earth?

242. Give any instances where reference is made to *priests* before the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the office.

243. How often does the term "Jesus Christ" occur in the Gospels, as a personal designation of our Lord?

244. The book of Numbers contains a document which is expressly stated to have been written by Moses by Divine command. Give chapter and verse.

245. What is the earliest notice of burning criminals alive, and for what crime was this punishment assigned in the Pentateuch?

246. What passages containing a *verbal* reference to the book of Genesis are found in the prophecy of Hosea?

247. Give the first mention made of Tyre in the Bible.

248. Enumerate the alleged discrepancies between the discourse of St. Stephen (Acts vii.) and the book of Genesis.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 704.

228. Yes; for on reference to Numb. xxxii. 1—5, we find that these two tribes were rich in cattle, and that the land they wanted to settle in was *fit for cattle*.

229. From Numb. iv. 25 and 32 we learn that the sons of Gershon had to bear all the light part of the furniture of the tabernacle; and that the sons of Merari had to bear the heavy part of the materials of which the framework of the tabernacle was constructed, and therefore would require the greater means of conveyance.

230. Gen. xix. 3. When Lot entertained two angels at Sodom he "made a feast, and did bake *unleavened bread*."

231. 1. At Cyprus—Elymas struck blind (Acts xiii. 11). 2. At Lystra—the lame man healed (Acts xiv. 8—10). 3. At Philippi—a damsel dispossessed (Acts xvi. 18). 4. At Ephesus—many diseases cured (Acts xix. 11, 12). 5. At Troas—Eutychus raised to life (Acts xx. 10—12). 6. At Melita—the viper innocuous (Acts xxviii. 5). 7. At Melita—Publius healed (Acts xxviii. 8, 9).

232. Acts ii. 30. "Therefore being a prophet,"